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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
13 May 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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HIGHLIGHTS

Significant engagements between Viet Cong and government forces continue to be reported today. In one action, Communist insurgents attacked a government textile mill on the outskirts of Saigon. There continue to be reports that another major Viet Cong attack is imminent. On the political front, the South Vietnamese Government has accused Cambodia of new border violations.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Small arms skirmishing continued yesterday in the immediate vicinity of Song Be, the capital of Phuoc Long Province, as government troops in a clearing operation clashed with withdrawing Viet Cong guerrillas (Para. 1). Communist insurgents, reportedly disguised as South Vietnamese marines, today attacked a government textile mill on the outskirts of Saigon (Para. 2). Heavy fighting has been reported in Bac Lieu Province, 100 miles southwest of Saigon (Para. 2).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
New trouble may be brewing in South Vietnamese naval circles (Para. 1). South Vietnam's defense ministry has accused Cambodia of border violations yesterday involving gunboats and Viet Cong firing from Cambodian territory (Para. 2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

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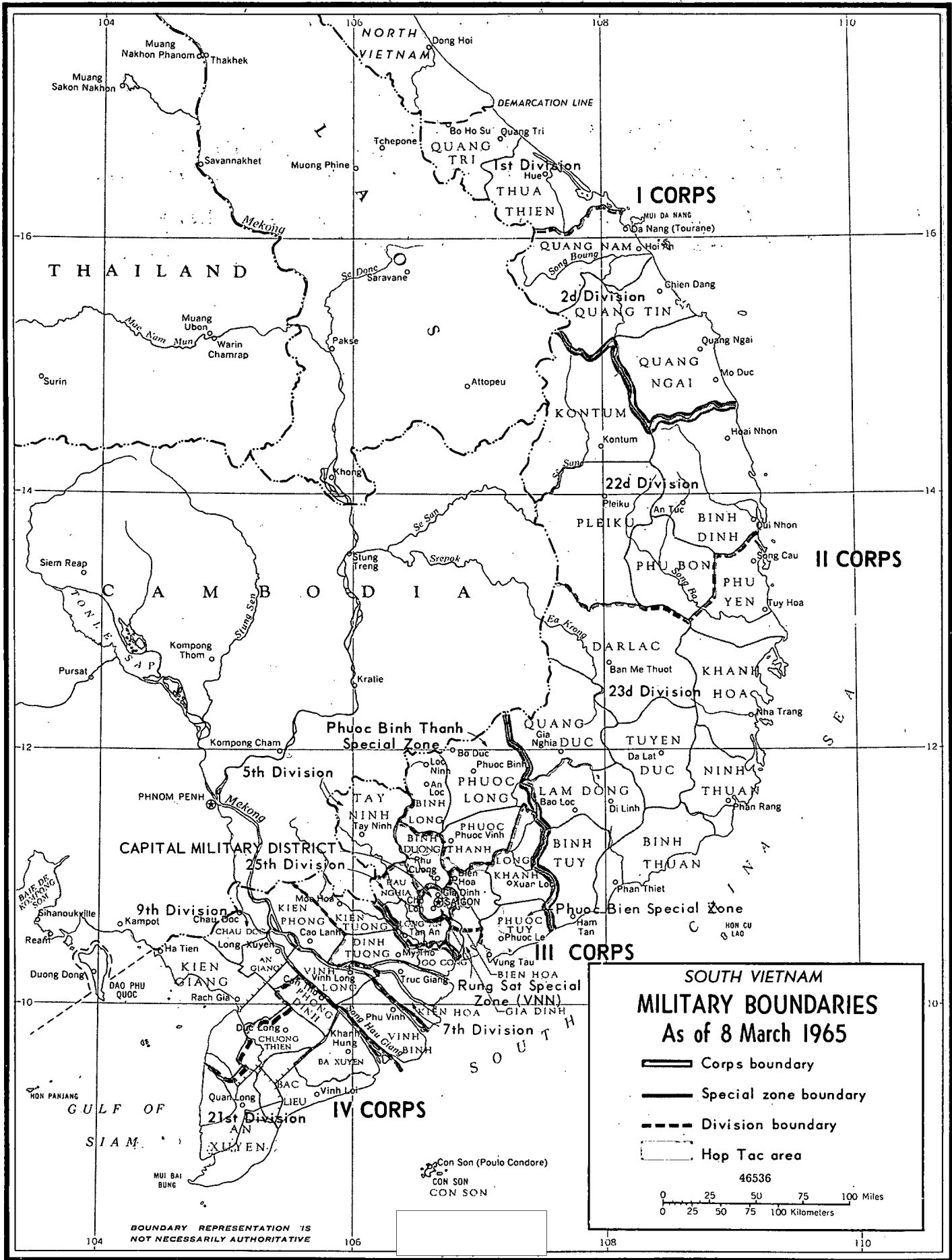
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**V. Communist Political Developments: There
is nothing of significance to report.**

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Small arms skirmishing continued yesterday in the immediate vicinity of Song Be, the capital of Phuoc Long Province, as troops on a government clearing operation clashed with withdrawing Viet Cong guerrillas. Friendly casualties in the latest incident were placed at 15 killed and 15 wounded (2 US), while the Communists reportedly lost 20 killed. The engagement brought total government losses in the Song Be action to 55 killed (5 US), 135 wounded (15 US), 34 missing, and 79 weapons captured. Viet Cong casualties to date are 59 killed (body count) and an estimated 250-270 killed carried away. MACV has also confirmed that the regimental-size guerrilla force which attacked Song Be was equipped with 57-mm. recoilless rifles, 75-mm. pack howitzers, and 81-mm. mortars.

2. Press reports state that an estimated platoon of Communist guerrillas masquerading as South Vietnamese marines attacked a textile factory on the outskirts of Saigon today. Five government soldiers assigned to protect the plant and three civilians were wounded. Elsewhere, heavy fighting was reported in Bac Lieu Province, 100 miles southwest of Saigon, where an estimated Viet Cong battalion had pinned down airlifted Vietnamese troops with intensive small arms fire. At least 15 ARVN soldiers and one US military adviser were reportedly wounded before air strikes forced the insurgents to lift their assault. Enemy losses were placed at 16 killed and 10 weapons captured.

3. MACV's military report for 11 May shows 53 Communist-initiated incidents, five of them occurring during the reporting period. The Viet Cong fired 60-mm. mortars on a district capital in Phuoc Long Province and on an armored train in Binh Thuan Province. They mined and fired on a Phu Yen Province railroad bridge defended by Popular Force guards, destroying 200 meters of rail. An ARVN scout company in Khanh Hoa Province

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[REDACTED]

received small arms harassing fire. Small-scale terrorism, hamlet entry and harassment, mine detonations, and harassing fire actions against government troops, outposts, and watchtowers remained widespread.

4. The level of over-all VNAF/USAF activity increased significantly during the reporting period. Pilot reports from combat air operations conducted in all four corps areas of South Vietnam on 11 May list 52 Viet Cong killed, 184 structures destroyed, 36 damaged, and seven machine gun positions destroyed.

5. [REDACTED] 50X1

[REDACTED] leader stated recently 50X1
that there would soon be some "sensational news" because "our fighters" were preparing a surprise gift for Ho Chi Minh's birthday on 19 May. [REDACTED] 50X1

[REDACTED] 50X1
[REDACTED] in the past [REDACTED] 50X1
[REDACTED] the leader's remarks are often designed for pure propaganda. 50X1

[REDACTED] 50X1

[REDACTED] 50X1

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[REDACTED] 50X1



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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. New trouble may be brewing in the South Vietnamese Navy, stemming from the desire of Commander in Chief Minh to discipline four subordinate officers who mutinied against their former commander earlier this year. Minh reportedly sent written orders to the new naval commander, Captain Phan, to replace the four officers, and to transfer them to General Staff headquarters for disciplinary measures. Later, the orders were revoked orally, reportedly because of pressure on Minh from Defense Minister General Thieu. This reversal probably had Premier Quat's concurrence. Phan, however, has so far refused to rescind the order, and new rumors of a possible naval rebellion are brewing.

2. Press reports state that South Vietnam's Armed Forces Ministry issued a communiqué today charging that Viet Cong guerrillas stationed in Cambodia yesterday bombarded with mortar fire a village in Chau Doc Province, killing four Vietnamese civilians and wounding 14 others. The communiqué reportedly also accused Cambodian warships of violating South Vietnamese "fluvial" waters yesterday, but did not locate the site of the alleged incident. No official information is available to confirm either charge. This general area along the Mekong has been plagued with numerous border incidents.

3. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that an agreement existed with Cambodian authorities along the border to shelter Viet Cong transients or wounded in return for alerts from the Viet Cong on possible border incursions by South Vietnamese troops. Similar allegations of "agreements" between Phnom Penh and the Viet Cong have been made [REDACTED] in the past, but have never been substantiated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] at various times cooperative arrangements are struck between the VC and local Cambodian border forces.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

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2. There have been fewer reports of food shortages in North Vietnam this winter than in the winter of 1963-64. This appears to reflect the slight improvement in food output which took place during 1964. [redacted] have reported adequate supplies of food in the markets and the approaching spring rice harvest--beginning this month--will further ease conditions. Although long-term prospects are clouded by the almost routinely mediocre harvests and by a rapidly growing population, North Vietnam should have little difficulty in continuing to meet its food deficit by grain imports.

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3. North Vietnam's purchases of grain in the free world appear to be at normal levels. Hanoi is presently negotiating in London for about 12,000 tons of Mexican wheat. Earlier in the year, North Vietnam bought 15,000 tons of wheat from Argentina and held talks concerning 10,000 to 20,000 tons of Mexican corn. Last year, North Vietnam is known to have imported at least 162,000 tons of grain by sea. Some 123,000 tons of this was provided by Western suppliers.

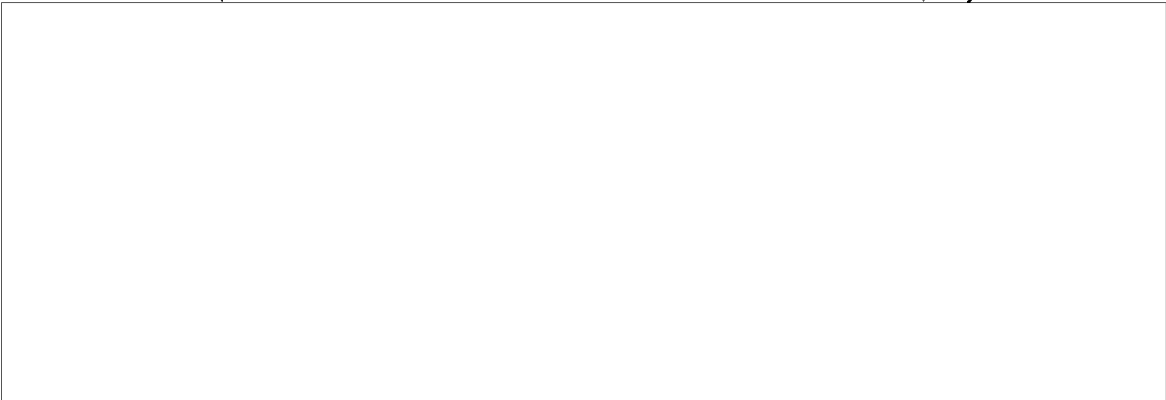
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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing of significance to report.

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